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NARRATIVE

OF

A PEDESTRIAN JOURNEY

THROUGH

RUSSIA AND SIBERIAN TARTARY,

FROM THE

FRONTIERS OF CHINA

TO THE

FROZEN SEA AND KAMTCHATKA;

PERFORMED DURING THE YEARS

1820, 1821, 1822, AND 1823,

BY

CAPT. JOHN DUNDAS COCHRANE, R.N.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1824.

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Gulf of Penjinsk
Penjinsk Gulf
Penjinsk
Gawraki
Petropawlowsk
Bolcheretzk
Tigilskoi
Kamtschatka
Kamtschatka R.
Awatscha R.
Awatscha Bay
Tschaschma
Tschaschma Bay
Tschaschma R.
Tschaschma Nos
Tschaschma Nos
Tschaschma Nos

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000 ter which, on a beautiful frosty moon-light morning, I resumed the journey over a picturesque and mountainous country, well wooded and watered. Late at night we reached a small place called Apachinsk, forty-five miles. Ere we arrived we had to cross the river called Bolshaya in a canoe, the river not being frozen, a circumstance at this time of the year very
361 rarely known. Thirty-miles farther we reached the
161 ancient capital of Kamtchatka, Bolcheretzk, now a small village containing fourteen dwellings, one hundred and sixteen inhabitants, and about thirty
000 balagans, i. e. sheds for drying fish. The path to it was over a flat level along the river. I was myself the driver towards the abode of my now father-in-law, whose homely manners, numerous, healthy, smiling children, and hearty breakfast, made ample amends for the fatigues of the last two days.

Bolcheretzk stands on the river of its own name, about fifteen miles from the sea of Okotsk, and has little to boast of at present but the affectionate remembrance the inhabitants bear to the memory of Major Behm, so highly spoken of by Captain King. I heard, also, strange stories of the celebrated Benjofsky, who made his escape hence to Canton, having previously murdered some people, and fomented an insurrection. I heard nothing in his favour, although an old lady, afterwards my aunt,
563 was a companion of his. I found Bolcheretzk to be inhabited by a civil people, all Russians: but
000 were it otherwise it might be expected I should

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000 speak highly of it, as the first place where my wife saw the light of day.

I could not fail of being a welcome guest at such a place, where neither tobacco, tea, nor spirits had been tasted for the last three months by any individual. Of course I left a small quantity of each article with my friends, making them, as it were, roll in luxuries, in return for which I received several sables and foxes as presents. The state of the river was such as to prevent my proceeding upon my journey in less than two days, which period I passed very happily, wandering over the extensive site of this ancient place; it is said to have formerly contained to the number of five hundred inhabitants, which have been reduced partly by the removal of the seat of government, and partly by disease.

Canoes being provided, I resumed my journey in a heavy fall of snow, and crossing three branches of the river entered upon a trackless maze of snow six and eight feet deep; so difficult to pass, that it was three o'clock the following morning before I reached Utka Ostrog, having been twenty hours in going fifteen miles. The route was along the sea coast, having far to the right an elevated range of mountains. Three miserable dwellings in an exposed situation, but with fine meadow lands, and plenty of game and fish, are all it can boast of. The chief was absent, hunting, and as I could not procure fresh dogs, I remained six hours to rest

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000 those I had, and then proceeded upon my journey, reaching by midnight Kickchick, twenty miles, a place of equal wretchedness with the last, and like it containing but fourteen or fifteen inhabitants, most of whom are disabled from work by disease. With the same dogs I reached Kolofsky ostrog thirty miles along the sea coast, upon which a tremendous surf was roaring with a strong north-west wind. There are in the neighbourhood several fine lakes which never freeze, and produce trout and salmon peal of a fine flavour during the whole of the winter. Deer, mountain sheep, and game of every description that is found in the Peninsula abound in the mountains and forests, and fine meadow lands every where skirt the coast.

133 I remained to take tea with the old Toion, whom
563 I found to be a fiddler and a scholar, and depart-
361 ed for Vorofskoy ostrog, forty miles. The mountains now approached nearer to the sea-coast, and present some beautiful scenery. I put up at the abode of a wealthy Russian farmer, and felt highly gratified
161 in observing a small but fat herd of cattle. This is
361 considered a rich spot, yet it contains only nine
133 dwellings with about forty inhabitants, not enough to keep up the chase. The place is prettily situated on the Vorofskaya river, about four miles from the sea. There is a snug harbour at the mouth of the river, where the transports from Okotsk formerly visited, and the river is navigable to the village which retains the vestiges of a small fortress. The meadow lands about it are at once

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133 extensive and luxuriant. The inhabitants provided
361 me with frozen fish, a delicacy I had so much en-
161 joyed on the Kolyma, with ducks and rein-deer meat, as also with dogs to resume the journey, which carried me to Kolpakofskoi ostrog, thirty miles, along a dreary sea beach. The village contains six dwellings and twenty people, who furnished me with dogs to Kroutogorova thirty miles further, a beautiful situation near the extremity of the almost level plane reaching from hence to Bolcheretzk. The famous Sopka, i. e. burning mountain, near Tchinsk, here becomes visible, and although the country is so rich, not a head of cattle is to be met with from Vorofskaya.

To Tchinsk are thirty miles of superior country, yet so deep in snow that we were obliged to take it by turns to go a head with snow shoes, at other times the government of a narte was thrown upon me, which I at first made but a bungling hand of. Tchinsk has twelve dwellings, it is consequently a considerable place! there are also two priests, brothers, whom I found drinking a
576 decoction of dried herb instead of tea. I felt angry with the Toion who had let slip eight dogs intended for me, and declined entering his dwelling, the strongest mark of displeasure which can be shown to these simple people. The poor fellow felt the slight so severely as he saw me entering another yourte, that I could not help regretting the deter-
361 mination I had made. To Soposhna it is thirty-five miles, which I travelled in company with the

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361 reverend pedlers, for every body here is a mer-
161 chant. I made them happy by a pound of tea, a
133 few pounds of tobacco, and a bottle of spirits. The road was very fine and the weather had much increased in cold, so much so, that the thermometer stood at 25°, which I had never before seen in Kamtchatka above 18°. Thence to Morososhna, thirty miles of a good road. The last named village may be termed large, containing eighteen dwellings and a hundred inhabitants, in the enjoyment of many luxuries, yet without cattle. Thence the road lay along the foot of the mountains, the scenery of which gives a relief to the eye as it is in general uninteresting all the way to Bolcheretzk, except at a few places. Upon the road to Belagolofsk ostrog, thirty-five miles, I got twice upset into the river without the means of drying or changing my clothes, and suffered much, in consequence, in my feet. I had a fine view of the magnificent Ichinskaya Sopka or mountain, which continued visible until I reached Khariuzova forty miles, the road to which is in general good, though there are some parts dangerous in the night time. The ice from the rapidity of the current, frequently sunk under us, but from our velocity of movement no accident happened.

487 At midnight I continued on for Kovranskoy os-
R trog, twenty-two miles. There is here a law oblig-
177 ing the Toions to have a path made within twenty-
.48 four hours after every snow storm. Our chief had failed in his duty in this particular, and conse-

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487 quently was obliged to go before upon his snow
R shoes; and such was his diligence from fear of re-
177 prehension, that he not only arrived before me, but
.48 arrived in five hours, a very short time to accomplish such a journey upon snow shoes. I found it the most miserable place I had seen for a long period, reminding me of Zashiversk in northern Siberia. The brows of the hills are covered with brush wood, with little other appearance of nature.
133 From hence to Uskolofskoy ostrog are thirty-five
161 miles, which I was obliged to do by walking and al-
361 ternately driving a narte, and cannot say which of the two is the most fatiguing. The diseases prevalent in the place prevented almost any assistance being rendered us. There are no cattle, yet fine meadow lands. Fish and game are abundant. At this place I met with another old shipmate in the person of the brandy contractor, who accompanied me to the next station, Napanas, a village with six dwellings and forty people. The road leading to it is considered dangerous, owing to a large toondra or swampy desert which must be crossed; the dis-
000 tance is forty miles. We passed the desert in a slight fall of snow, which had not been sufficient to obliterate the marks of the track, else we must have been compelled to halt whenever the snow overtook us. I did not arrive until two o'clock in the morning, having been previously hurled down a snowy declivity of one hundred feet in depth: at the bottom of which, I, guide, dogs and narte all lay huddled together; however vexed I felt inclined to

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be, I could not help laughing. The guide could hardly have intended a performance of the kind, which might have caused serious consequences; it is true, he was a little in liquor, but that was my fault rather than his.

The velocity and facility with which we had descended the declivity, was more than equalled by the difficulty we had in ascending from it. To drag me and the narte from the abyss required all the dogs of the other vehicles, as well as the help of all the drivers, yet we succeeded at length; when upon replacing the baggage, my pocket-book, containing passports and other papers relative to my journey were missing; this, though perhaps an imaginary evil would have been severely felt by me. For a long time we searched in vain, turning up the snow, and at last I gave them up for lost. Such a loss never did, nor probably ever will happen to any other person: the papers which formed its contents are not likely to be again granted. The poor guide was the picture of despair, and vowed to do penance if he could only recover them, which at last was effected through the exertions of the brandy chief. We arrived thence all well, and fared heartily. Napanas contains eight dwellings and an excellent Toion, who induced the people under his command to show me the national dance. The poor fellows willingly obliged me, showing the improvements they have made upon the practice of bears, or rather, perhaps, on that of goats. The dance consists in a variety of distortions of features

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535 and limbs, all doubtless derived from the ridiculous and wanton customs of their ancestors. The dance of the Cossacks is equally bad if not worse, yet I have seen it often practised in Yakutsk by females who should have known better. The woman, who is the principal performer, commences the dance with a handkerchief extended by the hands, somewhat like our own shawl dances; now used to hide her face from one, then from another, but always with the object of singling out him whom she most prefers as her partner. In a most unbecoming posture she approaches the favourite from the centre of the room; now dropping her head with a pensive air alternately upon each breast or shoulder, while her hands are employed in committing outrages upon decorum. The man, having taken hold of the handkerchief, joins the dance; the woman now reluctantly affecting to quit, appears again as anxious to rejoin him; this sort of antic motion is continued, till at length the woman sinks as from fatigue upon her knees, and in the act of falling is dexterously recovered by the man; and thus the dance closes. The agility and imitative powers of these wild Asiatics are really surprising, and I make no doubt that were they to have an opportunity of seeing the modern improvement in the art of dancing, as *exhibited* now-a-days in various public theatres, they would be found capable of imitating, not only *bears* and *goats*, but *geese* also.

000 From Napanas I proceeded down the river of its own name to its junction with the Tygilsk, hav-

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000 ing previously sent the Cossack with the post, and my baggage straight on to the fortress. I reached the haven, where the brig Paul was laid up in the ice, with her lower rigging over the mast-head, I suppose to become frost bitten. She belongs to the government, and makes *one voyage annually to Okotsk* with bread, stores, &c. carrying back the furs which have been collected. A brig of one hundred and twenty tons is thus kept in commission to carry bread for a few people a distance of three hundred miles. Its commander, officers, and about twenty-five people paid and fed the whole year! I never knew a more shameful instance of inconsiderateness on the part of the officers of any place, in any country. This brig on an average is not more than fifteen days at sea in the course of the year, and ought if proper exertions were made, and proper encouragement given, to supply Idgiga, Tygil, and Yamsk with provisions; instead of which each of these places keeps a similar vessel. Tolerably good barracks and store houses have been built by the steersman, or commander, who has charge of the brig. The distance of the haven to the sea is ten miles, and below the fortress twenty, which last place I reached in time to dine with its commander, a lieutenant of the imperial navy, a young man who had held the situation near five years, but who will now shortly leave it, that being the period allotted for his continuation in service.

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133 Tygil stands on the river of its own name, at
161 thirty miles from the sea. The country round it has
361 somewhat of the picturesque during the summer,
but its situation in winter is exposed and dreary. A
range of mountains from the NE to the SE defend
it in some degree from the coldest winds, yet it is
on the whole but a poor place. There are at pre-
sent twenty-seven dwellings and two hundred and
361 fifty inhabitants, and it is denominated a fortress;
181 formerly it may actually have been one, but at
R present will be best appreciated as to its strength
177 by a reference to George's Travels in Siberia, who,
. 71 speaking of fortresses or ostrogs, the latter word
comprehending Siberian fortresses, says, "It would
be dangerous to attempt storming them, for who-
ever wanted to mount the greatest and only bul-
wark, a wooden paling, would most probably come
to the ground with the whole structure about him."
Such I am certain is the present state of Tygil,
and which, with its half dozen Cossacks, can only
be held *in terrorem* over the neighbouring Koriaks:
the Kamtchatdales are not a people numerically or
physically strong enough to create a disturbance.

361 The inhabitants of Tygil are all Russians, they
563 have of late got a church and the walls of an hos-
pital erected; when they are to be covered in I
know not, though shortly I hope, for they are
much wanted. The ravages of a certain disease
at this place are indeed dreadful, and I should
think ought to call forth the attention of the govern-

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361 ment so far as to induce them to export doctors to,
563 and import priests from Kamtchatka. I mean no disrespect to those reverend gentlemen, but just to hint, as my opinion, that instead of the soul only, it would be better to take care of the soul and body at the same time. The average number of people annually admitted to the hospital books is three hundred and fifty, nearly twice its whole population, who are chiefly employed in fishing and trading with the neighbouring Koriaks or Kamtchatdales. The place also serves to keep up the winter communication with Okotsk. For the Koriaks will not furnish rein-deer or dogs to carry the post, unless they are remunerated by a present of tobacco, spirits, &c.

000 From what I have seen of the Koriaks, both in Tygil and in their encampments to the southward, I have no doubt of their being of the same tribe as the Tchuktchi; they have the same features, manners, and customs, and the same language—the same love of independence, and are, in truth, less scrupulous of giving offence to the Russians than their northern neighbours, for they frequently break out in hostility with the inhabitants of Tygil, unless a supply of spirits and tobacco is sent to them, for which, however, they barter rein-deer and furs.

132 The climate of Tygil is cold; already had the
563 thermometer passed 28° of Reaumur. The Cossacks however, contrive to raise a few vegetables, as po-

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563 tatoes, cabbages, turnips and radishes; but the two
137 former never arrive at complete maturity, the one being waxy, and the other without a head. The famous antiscorbutic cheremsha, or wild garlick, abounds, as does a small but delicious root, somewhat resembling a sweet potatoe, called, in the language of the country, kimtchiga. There is also an abundance of wild berries in the neighbourhood of Tygil, yet their chief support is fish and rein-deer, of both which I partook at the hospitable table of
000 the commander of the fortress. At the expiration of four days I departed, having remained so long to recover my feet, which had been severely frost-bitten from wet.

I was accompanied by the commander of the transport lying in the Haven: he was what is termed a good, though a droll, fellow; and I was
133 gratified with his society. Our route lay at first
361 up the Tygil, which from its source to near the town runs through an interesting country. At midnight we reached Sedanka, a small village, containing six dwellings. From thence to Bolcheretzk is called the Tygil coast, which, generally speaking, is low and flat, the sea-coast being from thirty to forty miles from the mountains. The villages through which I had come were all of them upon the banks of some small streams, which, in most cases, rise in the mountains; but sometimes they emanate from the lakes, which are numerous. The rivers I do not apprehend to be

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133 more than the melting of snow and rain which de-
231 scend from the eternally snow-clad peaks. The quantity of horned cattle upon the coast is so small as not to merit notice, although the pastures are extensive and fertile enough to feed millions.

563 At Sedanka we procured dogs to enable us to cross the mountains to the next station, a distance of one hundred miles. Early in the morning we passed the camp of the Koriaks, and continued our route along the Sedanka river for forty miles, when we reached the Rasoshna. We encamped for the night in the snow, the dogs round us, and then the fire; we passed on the whole, a pleasant night, although my feet were still in a bad state, owing probably to their late want of pedestrian exercise.

133 The following day we crossed numerous elevated
137 lakes, and then over mountains and a well wooded country. On our way we fell in with a caravan of eleven nartes from the town of Cliutchi bound to

133 Tygil. We continued until we reached an elevated
132 desert of ten miles long, which we crossed in a continual storm of wind and snow, called in this country *purga;* we halted in a miserable place, having come about thirty miles. I can hardly imagine how the poor dogs found their way, or how they managed to drag us along. There are times when these *purgas* are so tremendous that mountains of snow are levelled, immense valleys filled, whirlpools formed of snow, not only stopping the further progress of the traveller, but absolutely burying him

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132 and his dogs: nothing can exceed the devastation,
133 or be compared to it, but the effects of the wind on sandy deserts or mountains. I have known instances of people detained for twenty and thirty days in this tremendous pass, and it is seldom that it is crossed without a gale. And yet all this difficulty and danger might be obviated simply by the erection of crosses or mounts, as in the northern parts of Siberia, where I have seen in the distance of thirty or forty miles, a small mound of earth, with a white and black chequered cross placed at every one hundred and fifty yards.

133 The night was exceedingly cold, and the snow
137 and wind prevented our even enjoying the luxury of a cup of tea, for no fire could be lighted. Crossing a second toundra, desert, of seven miles wide, with infinite labour to the dogs as well as ourselves, we entered upon a most magnificent country. Lofty, straight, and stout firs lined the right of the valley, while the dwarfish larch, and alder, mixed with birch, stood upon the left in all their bandied and
000 crooked shapes. The contrast was extremely pleasing as we glided along the milky valleys at a rapid rate. Immediately upon clearing the desert the snow and wind ceased, and we hailed the return of fine cold weather. Not long after we overtook a caravan of nartes in great distress, having been detained ten days in the mountains by the weather. The dogs had been without food for three days, and were evidently in the last stage. In the early

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000 part of the evening we reached the Yelofka river,
which unites not far hence with the Kamtchatka,
running in a picturesque manner through the coun-
361 try. At seven we reached the ostrog of Yelofka,
161 fortunate in having crossed the mountains so safely.
133 Yelofka is a pleasant village of eight dwellings
and forty-six people, the country round it is ele-
vated and well wooded. We remained only a few
hours to refresh ourselves, and then continued the
journey along the river of its own name, the banks
of which afford some beautiful scenery for about
fifteen miles. We then came to a desert which we
crossed in a purga, fortunately not very heavy. At
forty miles we reached the village of Khartchina of
000 five dwellings and thirty inhabitants. I was wel-
comed to it by a respectable looking old man, a
priest, son to the highly eulogized priest of Para-
tounka. The son perfectly well remembered Cap-
tains Cook and Clerk; he having been at that time
a young man, living with his father at the village of
Paratounka. Several uninteresting anecdotes were
related of them, as also of Perouse, in their rambles
of shooting or chasing the wild animals. I had at
Yakutsk been recalled to the remembrance of Cap-
tain Cook by a silver watch, which now belongs to
Captain Minitsky, of the Russian navy, and which,
I think, is spoken of somewhere as having been
given away by that great navigator to some indi-
vidual merchant. He probably disposed of it, and
thus at last it has fallen into the hands of the pre-

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000 sent holder, who, though I feel assured he appreciates it highly, yet would not retain it, should relations, or others more nearly concerned, express a desire to be possessed of so valuable a memorial.

133 From Kharchina the route lies over a large lake,
137 and thence over a fine open country, abounding
361 with some of the finest fir-trees I have ever seen, reaching to the height of sixty and eighty feet. At twenty miles we reached the ostrog of Kamennoy, on the right bank of the Kamtchatka, and, changing dogs, proceeded twelve miles farther to Kama-
136 kie over numerous lakes near the river. The coun-
361 try here abounds with red foxes, and is certainly one of the most picturesque parts of the Peninsula: the beautiful view of the Sopka, or Peak of Cliuchie, was hid in the clouds. I movedon to wards Nishney Kamtchatsk, also an antient capital in the Peninsula, a far more eligible place than the pre-
000 sent site. The weather had now become very mild, no less than 3° of heat of Reaumur. We made good about seven miles of our journey through very deep snow by the ensuing morning. For three hours we did not move forward more than one mile, a heavy fall of snow had taken place, and it was found impossible to proceed, owing to the extraordinary heat of the weather. No track nor scent offered to the dogs, otherwise I would have persisted in the prosecution of my journey. The drivers, however, with snow shoes actually sunk eighteen inches deep in the snow, and I was therefore com-

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000 pelled to return. We soon regained the ostrog we had left, and there we passed the night, witnessing such a scene of riot and drunkenness as is quite beyond my pen to describe. My companion had parted with a few bottles of spirits unadulterated, which, when they had operated, induced him again to launch out adulterated spirits, receiving, of course, a sable for each bottle. I was thoroughly convinced from this circumstance that Kamtchatka should not be supplied with spirits.

361 I was mortified at not visiting the town of
161 Nishney Kamtchatsk, and its port, but may say
137 that the former contains twenty-two dwellings, and one hundred and fifty inhabitants, and the latter an accessible port, but much feared for want of being frequented. Formerly, when the seat of government was held there, vessels annually went to St. Peter and St. Paul's for provisions, but this is now no longer the case. Timber abounds in such quantities and of such a quality as should induce the government to fell and to export it to the present capital, where it is much wanted. I reached Cliuchie at midnight, having come over a few lakes
133 and a half frozen river. Cliuchie is a Russian pea-
361 sants' village, containing one hundred and eighty
563 inhabitants. It is pleasantly situated upon the right bank of the Kamtchatka, at the foot of the eastern termination of the lofty peak which is not far from it. This peak is said to be the most elevated in the peninsula, being about fifteen thousand

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133 feet above the level of the sea. It has frequently emitted flames, lava, and dust, but its summit was not visible during my stay in this respectable village of Christians. After the grand eruption which I had witnessed in the Island of St. Vincent's, in 1812, I could feel no regret at not being able to see one in Kamtchatka. It is true that little or no mischief arises from the volcanoes of this Peninsula, and they may therefore be more innocently and placidly seen and contemplated.

651 The amount of tribute paid by the peasants is
563 about ten shillings, formerly it was twenty; being
R reduced one half at the time the Kamtchatdale ya-
177 sack was reduced from two to one sable. The
.65 country is in every respect most luxuriant and beautiful, and were there a sufficiency of inhabitants, as well as of horned cattle, it would no doubt make one of the most desirable abodes in the world.

563 Wood of the first growth, fish in a most abundant
361 quantity, game of the finest flavour, and of various species, pastures inconsumable; a chase which yields foxes, sables, river-otters, bears, wolves, &c. of the finest specimens, are what Cliuchie has to boast. Vegetables are raised with greater facility than in any other part of the peninsula. Wild berries are very abundant, and some little rye flour is produced, though not of so ripe a quality as to be of much use; such are, in short, the claims of Cliuchie, that it should undoubtedly be made the capital of the peninsula, and I am only astonished

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563 it is not so, considering how well its central situ-
361 ation is adapted for that purpose. A neat church has lately been erected at the expense of the inhabitants, who are in general disliked by the chiefs and officers, owing to their resisting the payment of individual yasack, or presents. This is surely an enhancement of their character.

563 I quitted the village of Cliuchie perfectly satisfied with the character and conduct of its inhabitants. They preserve a great tenaciousness of their rights, and detestation of the injustice shown to their neighbours, the aborigines. To prove this assertion, I need but mention that with these Cliuchie peasants, I was obliged to pay in money for the hire of the dogs which drew me; a circumstance which had happened to me no where else, and therefore carries the most undoubted proof of exactions, extortions, and cruelty exercised upon the most innocent and inoffensive peo-
132 ple in the world. My route lay from Cliuchie at first over some small lakes, and then along the banks of the Kamtchatka, which at this period of the year, 14th December, O. S. is but half frozen.
361 At twenty-five miles I reached the ostrog called
161 Krestova, having three yourtes and twenty-four in-
164 habitants, nearly all of whom are confined by disease. I continued on with the same dogs to Oushkielova, thirty miles farther, having four habitations and twenty individuals, most of whom also are debilitated: indeed it is extraordinary what

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164 havoc the introduction of the small pox, and an-
other distemper, made at the ostrogs on the banks
000 of the Kamtchatka. Remarkably fine and extensive
meadow lands, attend the traveller all the way
from Cliuchie to Kozerofsky, as well as noble
forests of timber; and there are seasons when cat-
tle might maintain themselves during the whole of
the winter, the snow being then of no great depth;
yet there are but few heads of these necessary
animals. The scenery to the southward along the
banks of the river, is also of the most picturesque
and sublime appearance. The magnificent peak
soaring to the clouds has a fine effect when viewed
from the bed of the river.

361 Kozerofsky, forty miles beyond Oushkielova,
161 contains five dwellings and thirty-six people, and
is pleasantly situated. I continued along the river
Kamchatka for twelve miles, and then along that
of the Tolbachinsk to an ostrog of the same name
for thirty miles more. The latter part of the journey
was through a crowded forest, and a thick fog,
which occasioned me some serious blows, as the
dogs made their rapid progress; now and then start-
ing at the scent of a fox or sable. Tolbachinsk is
a pretty little village with thirty inhabitants, and
appears to be on the improvement; the establish-
ment is a new one and almost secluded from the
world. Stchappinat was the next village I came
to. It is upon the Kamtchatka, at a deep and nar-
row part of the river which was not yet frozen

137 enough to bear the nartes. I crossed two other small rivers by bridges for that reason. The scenery was very beautiful, a lofty range of mountains lay to the east with a good deal of fine timber, while the flat country is one fine uninterrupted meadow,
361 without a single cow to feed upon it. Stchappinat
161 has seven dwellings and fifty-two inhabitants, and,
136 it is said, the finest fish in the peninsula, though but
226 few are actually procured from it: they are considered so delicious that the inhabitants send them to the seat of government as presents to the chief and officers. The causes of their comparative scarcity are probably the depth and rapidity of the river, as well as the smallness of the nets; for unless the river be actually swarming with fish, it is seldom that the inhabitants can provide themselves with a sufficient supply.

137 To Massura are forty miles of a well wooded
361 country, and fine meadows upon the banks of the
161 river. I almost flew the distance, being scarcely
234 six hours in performing it. There are ten dwellings and sixty people, civil and hospitable to a proverb; a considerable quantity of cattle are in the neighbourhood, feeding on a rich pasture which runs to Kirgannick twenty-five miles further, where I got sight of the magnificent mountain scenery over hanging Verchney Kamtchatsk. One Sopka
361 (Peak) is especially remarkable. Milkova, a
563 Russian peasant village, ten miles distant contains fifteen houses and one hundred and twenty inhabit-

361 ants received me next, a neat place abounding in
563 cattle, if thirty or forty of them may constitute an abundance; there are however no animals of the chase. A handsome church has of late been erected under the auspices of Captain Golenistcheff, the second in command of the peninsula, whom I found expecting my arrival. I continued for Verchney Kamtchatsk, also a peasants' village, but was obliged to return owing to the inefficiency of the
361 dogs, although distant only eight miles; I at length
563 reached it much fatigued, having come through
R a pretty place called Schegatchik, where some Cos-
177 sacks are stationed to take care of a few heads of
. 23 horned cattle, and four or five horses, which belong to the government. The situation is beautiful, on a branch of the Kamtchatka, which makes a semicircular indentation into the land, just opposite to Verchney Kamtchatsk, forming an island opposite to the junction of the Gatchick and Milkova.

000 I procured fresh dogs at Verchney, a place on the decline, and proceeded towards Sherom twenty miles, situated in one of the most romantic and enchanting valleys in the peninsula. I there met with the Ispravnick and eighteen nartes engaged for the collection of the yasacks, public and private, as well as for trade. I felt gratified to meet them, as I received good news of my affairs at the seat of government; and learnt also that there was a road before me to cross the desert, lying towards Malka. The Ispravnick had been detained four-

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000teen days in a storm, and he and all the party, men and dogs, were nearly perishing of hunger, having partaken of nothing but youkola (dried fish) for five days. Having exchanged dogs with another narte,
574I continued on for Pouschin, twenty miles, and
576arrived before noon. The Toion and I had a difference of opinion, which I shall ever regret, as it arose from my ignorance of the proper character of the Kamtchatdales. The poor man had heard of my coming, and had actually provided a good dinner for me, which I did not partake of, in consequence, of his not inviting me; another poor man actually did invite me, and I entered his more humble dwelling. The Toion was much surprised, and more vexed at this slight, which tended to lower him in the opinion of his subjects. The fact proved to be that the Toion is really one of the oldest Kamtchatdales, and was only complying with the ancient custom of the country, which is not to invite a stranger into his dwelling, considering that such stranger has the right not only to take it, but even to eject its owners. I left him with great regret that I could not stay another day to make him amends; I did, however, all I could, with this view.

133 Ganal, forty-five miles from Pouschin, a ro-
132 mantic country, we passed in high glee at the near
361 prospect of finishing my journey. The elevated ranges of mountains which form the Ganal Valley have all flat summits. To the valley succeeds a level

133 plane, very subject to storms and heavy falls of
132 snow. I reached the place at nine in the evening.
The inhabitants, amounting to thirty-two, live in
161 four yourtes, and are all afflicted with the disease
164 so common to the peninsula; and the contagion, and
262 want of medicine have been so great, that even the
361 children are equally afflicted, and the complaint of
scrofula is become hereditary. In this part of the
peninsula the chase is scarce, and the inhabitants
mostly subsist upon fish, a few mountain sheep, and
wild rein-deer, being the only meat they taste from
one end of the year to the other. The situation is
fine and highly productive in fish, but at this mo-
ment there are not a sufficiency of people to trans-
act the ordinary business; a circumstance which
calls aloud for the compassion of the chief.

133 From Ganal to Malka are thirty miles, the first
361 ten of which are over a sterile mountainous coun-
try, which is more than compensated by the suc-
ceeding richness of a valley eighteen miles in
length. I crossed several times the Bistra, a
rapid stream, uniting with the Bolshaya Reka, and
was again obliged to become pilot, chief, and dog-
master; however, I managed very well, and ar-
rived early. Malka is deserving of little notice,
yet is said to be celebrated for its baths! The
situation is magnificently grand; the hospital
stands in the bosom of a lofty chain of elevated
mountains at two miles from the village. I was
welcomed by two old acquaintances, both of whom
[of Ganal village--Analyst]

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758 are doctors. Having refreshed myself, I proceeded
R to examine the hospitals and baths, all of which I
177 found in a disgraceful state of filthiness and decay.
. 75 There are two hospitals, one for the Kamtchatdales and a smaller one for the accommodation of the officers. There are also two baths, both ill contrived, and in want of every necessary and convenience which persons who have recourse to them require. The hospitals are without medicines, and the baths without flannel gowns, blankets, sheets, or towels; nor is there even a warm passage for the patient from the bath to the hospital; he must come from a place, where the atmosphere is equal to 25° of heat, and pass through a current of air where there may be 15° or 20° of frost. There never was a place where more could and ought to be, or where so little has been, done for the benefit of so wretched a people. The late chief doctor was five years in the command of this hospital, during which period he did nothing but keep his patients increasing in disease; indeed it may be considered a fortunate circumstance for the Kamtchatdales, that the governor was obliged to send him as surgeon of Captain Vassilieff's ship, in lieu of the proper surgeon who remained behind at sick quarters. Not even the most common vegetables have been raised; and but for a few cows, the benevolent present of Captain Rikord, the chief, I hardly know what there would be of the really useful for this establishment, which certainly owes

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758 nothing either to the industry or humanity of the
R doctor before alluded to.

177 The state of some of those miserable creatures
. 75 whom I saw in the hospital, was such as absolutely to prevent the doctor from dressing their wounds; of course I am incapable of describing them. They are allowed by the Emperor one pound of bread and half a pound of meat per day. They have also fish in abundance, and wild berries are to be found every where round the place. The patients, being all afflicted with one disease, are cramped up into one small space, never to go out but at their own desire, nor do any work, though they might raise an unlimited quantity of vegetables from the grounds covered with the warm vapour. In short, instead of being as it is, a place calculated to engender and nourish disease almost to pestilence, it might be, at a trifling expense and with proper care on the part of the head doctor, one of the most humane and efficient establishments on the face of the globe.

312 With respect to the nature and quality of the baths, they had a strong smell of sulphur, and an unpleasant taste. The hot and cold springs are united at the baths, and it is a strange circumstance, that the one should always be boiling hot in 25° of frost, while the other at 30° of heat is always below the freezing point. These were the only remarks my short stay, in the month of December, could enable me to make. I should, how-

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I should how-

753 ever, in justice observe, that the present head doc-
R tor, if it be Mr. Gramatin, who was my shipmate in
177 the transport from Okotsk, is a man of great talents,
.75 perseverance, and industry; and had, previous to my leaving the Peninsula, seven months after my arrival and visit to the hospital, cleared the place of three-fourths of the patients, and sent them to their homes quite cured. He had no remedy but surgical operations, and succeeded in first putting the patient to sleep, and then cutting out all the afflicted parts. To the truth of this statement, extraordinary as it will doubtles appear in Russia, I beg leave to add the attestation of Dr. Zaerzerfskey, who was with me at the hospital at the time to which I allude.

000 My route from Malka to St. Peter and St. Paul's was over a highly picturesque valley, and in beautiful weather. I soon reached Nachikin and Koraki, and, changing dogs, proceeded very pleasantly till midnight damped our satisfaction a little with a fall of snow. We halted to refresh the dogs, and lay down till the peep of dawn enabled us to proceed, and we reached Avatcha by noon. But no dogs were to be procured there except three which carried my little baggage; I therefore proceeded on foot, and reached the haven at about three o'clock. My entry, alone and unperceived, was widely different from my departure:—my sensations were correspondent. In melancholy mood, leaving my betrothed for the sake of wandering

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over a long and painful journey; returning delighted to have done so before I should be made most happy, by finding that betrothed true, and all that I could desire,—but no more of this.

Having thus completed the tour of the Peninsula, it will be proper in this place to enter on its description, with that of its inhabitants, their manners, customs, &c.

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CHAPTER XI.

General Observations on the Peninsula of Kamtchatka.

000 KAMTCHATKA is a large peninsula of an elliptical figure, extending from the latitude of 59° to 51° N; the breadth is inconsiderable. A magnificent chain of mountains, with numerous sopkas or peaks, extend from north to south, the whole length of the peninsula, from which mountains numerous rivers, large and small, find their way into the ocean. Of these the Kamtchatka is the only navigable one, admitting vessels of one hundred tons as far as one hundred and fifty miles up the stream. All the rivers are, however, crowded with fish of superior flavour. There are also lakes of considerable size, and so numerous, that all intercourse between the several parts of the Peninsula is, during spring, summer and autumn, effectually precluded.

132 The productions of the country are few but va-
137 luable. There is an abundance of wood, as fit for ship-building as for general use. The finest timber is found on the banks of the Kamtchatka, Yelofka, and eastern coast, but the climate is such as to induce me to believe that neither corn nor vegetables will ever attain to great perfection; the soil in all seasons, at the depth of twenty-four to thirty inches, being frozen. Potatoes never ripen, cab-

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132 bages never come to a head, and peas only flower;
137 but turnips and radishes thrive amazingly. Grass of the most nutritious quality is found in the greatest abundance, as well in the numerous meadows as in the forests. It grows to the height of between five and six feet, and in some places three crops are produced within the year.

132 Winter may be said to occupy near one half of the year, spring and summer the other half. The winters are mild when compared to those of Siberia; the thermometer never descending, in the southern parts of the Peninsula, below 20° of Reaumur, and seldom below 12° and 15°. Spring is the most agreeable time, just when the leaves put forth, and it is then the fishing commences. The summer is the most disagreeable portion of the year, owing to the heavy rains and heavier fogs which come from the eternally snow-clad mountains. The greatest heat is in July, when the thermometer is at 27° and 28°. The snow lying upon the ground seven and eight months will sufficiently account for the want of cultivation, but indeed the remaining four can hardly be considered as equal to more than two months in other places; for the sun at St. Peter and St. Paul's has no effect upon the earth during more than four hours of the day, and from the immense height of the mountains, it is only from ten o'clock until two that any heat is felt.

251 This absence of heat, and these changes of climate, with the very heavy fogs, which account for

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251 the sterility of the soil, operate also to prevent
263 the inhabitants from laying in a sufficient store of
439 winter provisions, which as they consist of fish are exposed to the air to dry, and in a short time become so rotten and maggotty, that but a small quantity can be made serviceable for the consumption of the people; the rest is retained for the dogs. Salt is at present issued, but not in sufficient quantities; were that article more liberally distributed, the people might in some years prepare fish to last them several successive ones. From the quantity now supplied by the king of the Sandwich islands, it is to be hoped that the first productive season will be taken advantage of.

137 Of wild vegetables, some of which are mixed
262 with the bark of trees for the fare of the inhabit-
439 ants, there is an abundance in Kamtchatka, and there is no doubt that greens, turnips, and radishes might with a little trouble be every where produced. Wild berries and wild garlick abound; the latter is exported to Okotsk and Yakutsk: this plant is one of the finest antiscorbutics known, but has a peculiarly offensive smell.

136 The principal riches of Kamtchatka may be said to consist in the animals of the chase, of which there are so prodigious a number, that there are not sufficient inhabitants to take them. The most valuable are foxes of various colours, a few sea and more river otters, with an immense number of sables. Bears, wolves, rein-deer and mountain-

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136 sheep, and sometimes a few lynxes, are also to be
438 found. The number of skins annually exported
439 and consumed in the peninsula is about thirty thousand, of which sables and foxes form the principal part. The sables are considered at once the warmest and the coarsest known; the foxes however, especially the fiery red, are of the finest spe-
231 cies. Next to these furs, the dogs of Kamtchatka may be considered as forming a great part of their riches. These faithful and useful animals, are employed to transport fish, supply the house with water, the cattle with hay,—in short to do all the work that horses perform in England. They are fed as circumstances may dictate, being always left to shift for themselves from June to October. They are of a coarse appearance, in shape resembling a common house-dog, but endued with great sagacity, and it is to be regretted that they are not relieved a little by the importation of horses.

136 Independent of fish and wild animals, the Kamtchatdales derive also a considerable benefit from the surprising quantities of geese, ducks, swans,
251 snipes, and wild cocks. They are preserved by
262 dipping them in water, which freezing, they will be good as long as winter continues; at other times they are salted. The ducks and snipes are most excellent; but the geese, swans, and wild sheep are considered venison, and of the most delicious kind too, by those who are termed epicures; for myself although I have frequently partaken of them,

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251 I never could relish their flesh. The Kamtchatdales
262 also derive great benefit from the whales which are
825 numerous, and which being encountered by the Kasatka, for the sake of the tongue, as is supposed, are killed and cast ashore. Upon the whole, therefore, there are no people at whose disposition Providence has placed more of the necessaries of life, than the inhabitants of Kamtchatka. For their direct subsistence, they have fish, flesh, and fowl, wild berries and roots in great variety and abundance, sufficient doubtless to maintain a large population; while for clothing, they have immense quantities of furs of the warmest and most durable kind;
137 and for firing and building, wood is every where to be had in the utmost profusion.

181 Such being the case, it becomes a matter of spe-
433 culation, what could induce the aborigines to live in that filthy and famished condition which formerly characterized them. Was it from an over abundant population, or the want of means to possess themselves of food—such as guns, nets and traps? That they had means to entrap game and fish for a certain proportion of the inhabitants there can be no doubt, but whether sufficient for a large population is very questionable.

157 Of the people in general, I can only say they are
177 as amiable and honest as ever. They are now esta-
221 blished in villages all built in the old Russian style, which are clean and comfortable. During the summer or fishing season, they leave their winter resi-

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157 dences for the balagans or places which they use
221 for drying their fish. Thus the summer is employed
177 in preparing food against the winter, which latter is taken up in the chase. Beyond this the Kamtchatdale is still the same lazy, drunken, servile animal as formerly. Their ancient language is not forgotten, but is so far out of use that there are few who do not speak Russian. Most of the aborigines are baptized, and may be said to live as the Russians do. The number of real Kamtchatdales who retain their ancient usages is small. They reside on the northern coasts beyond Tygil and Nishney Kamtchatsk. Hospitality is the most striking feature in their character; but they are also distinguished by their strict adherence to truth, and their honesty is proverbial. Without being forward to complain of ill-treatment, they will fearlessly recount it when
622 questioned. They are in part governed by their
631 own Toions or Chiefs, but an annual visit is made
R to each village by the Ispravnick or Chief Judge,
177 as well for the purpose of collecting sables as of
.63 administering justice.

177 Their dress is the same as formerly, that for the
291 winter season being made of the skins of beasts;
435 but in summer they wear nankeens, and at present there is hardly a Kamtchatdale who does not wear a shirt. The women have also adopted the Russian head-dress, the articles for which are procured
181 from the pedlers at a most exorbitant rate. It is sur-
435 prising that this people who have now been feeling

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181 the extreme of oppression from neglect and mal-
435 administration, for one hundred and twenty years, should not have become wiser and more economical in their habits; on the contrary, one might suppose they were a people but yesterday discovered. They will part with the most valuable furs for a trifling article, or a glass of spirits.

177 I need say nothing of their superstitions, as they
793 are nearly at an end. They now place as much re-
756 liance upon the efforts of the priests, as they formerly did on their shamanes, with this difference only, that to the latter they give many furs, while to the former they only gave a hearty meal.

183 Of laws they have but few of their own, their
554 motto being something like that of the Chinese,
692 " to return evil for evil, and good for good." At
R present they await the arrival of the Chief, of an
177 Officer, or of a Commissary, with a great deal of
.69 ceremony, giving him the best lodging, and acknowledging, if I may so say, his supremacy. Formerly, it appears, they lived in a perfect state of equality and independence of each other, age and expertness in hunting alone being held in estimation or respect.

177 The Kamtchatdales are now supplied with culi-
181 nary utensils and every thing they can require by the Russians; and as they live exactly in the same manner, and in the same description of houses with the latter, I need only refer my readers to an account of a Russian village; in their outward ap-

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177 pearance there is no difference whatever. They
181 seem a race disburthened of all care and consideration for the future, and entirely resigned to any fate which may await them, whether it be oppression or starvation.

177 In my opinion, and I speak it most sincerely, the
771 aborigines have not derived much benefit from the
793 conquest of their country by the Russians, as even their conversion to Christianity has done little other good, than entitled them to the name of Christians. The great number of priests and deacons (twenty-six in number) would, I presume, suggest an expectation of more learning and piety in this part of the world than in other semi-barbarous places; but really I have never seen any good effects from the labours of these reverend gentlemen. Certainly there is no population corresponding to the number of
161 ecclesiastics, as will appear on considering that the
231 whole Kamtchatdale population does not exceed,
563 male and female, two thousand seven hundred and sixty, while their dogs amount to two thousand two hundred and eight. The number of Russians is one thousand two hundred and sixty. The inhabitants north of Tygil and Nishney Kamtchatka, are four hundred and ninety-eight, while in the Koriak villages there are one hundred souls; making a population of four thousand five hundred and seventy-four, men, women, and children, Rus-
162 sians, Kamtchatdales and Koriaks. Whether the original population has not decreased in a surpris-

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ing degree is a question I shall not answer, farther than by reminding my readers that at the discovery of Kamtchatka, we are told in the Russian history, that no less than one hundred and sixteen villages were on the banks of the river Kamtchatka. The small-pox, and its rival distemper, with other diseases, and above all the spirit of persecution which has been unremittingly practised towards these poor people, have been the several causes of the depopulation. Of late, however, I can with certainty say the population has not decreased; this may be owing to the benefits arising from vaccination, as well as somewhat better medical attendants. But although population has of late kept its maximum, it may be a question whether the aborigines have not decreased in the same ratio that the Russians and convicts have increased. At present there are several Yakut as well as Russian exiles, in the peninsula, neither of whom can be of much benefit; but both assisting to persecute and plunder the Kamtchatdales.

Of the history and origin of the Kamtchatdales little positive has ever been known; and that only for the last one hundred and thirty years. Kamtchatka is supposed to have been visited by some Russians in 1649, when one of the traveller Deshneff's vessels, was wrecked on its coast. Those Russians lived with them in peace for a considerable period of time; but quarrelling among themselves were murdered. Nothing more is known of the place

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175 until Vladimir Atlassof discovered the peninsula
in his excursions from the Anadyr, from which
time a constant petty warfare continued between
the Russians and natives, until the general revolt
and massacre in 1731. Since this period, the pe-
ninsula has not been greatly troubled with either
171 conspiracies or massacres. Little doubt can exist
177 that the Kamtchatdales are of Asiatic origin; of
181 this, their features and customs, as well as their
dwarfish size, are evident tokens. I have read
several dissertations upon the subject, but disagree
with most of them. My own opinion is formed
from ocular demonstration alone, and not from a
study of the circumstances under which they
labour. Their having progressed from America is
indeed a ridiculous idea; and their having learnt
many secrets, as causing fire by friction, &c. from
the inhabitants of the opposite continent, is just
as probable as the other sagacious notions, that
they were the teachers. How, in either case, could
they pass that formerly ferocious and warlike race,
the Tchuktchi? Or if they had come from the
north of Siberia, from Irkutsk or Yakutsk by
Okotsk, and Idgiga, how did they pass the still
more fierce and barbarous Koriaks? The idea is
absurd; and the only one I can for a moment en-
tertain is, that they are a Mongole tribe, who were
driven down the Amoor, and passing along the
Kurile Isles, reached Kamtchatka. A few of the
same race are still the inhabitants of those isles,

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171 with a dialect of the same language, originating
181 from the Mongolian, and the only difference be-
177 tween them and the Kamtchatdales is, that they are a more manly, and consequently a more independent race; for of all the people at present
157 existing, I believe the natives of this peninsula to
181 be the most affable and hospitable; but, at the same time, the most cowardly and insensible. I never saw in any part of the world a people more abused, under the sanction of a proverb, now become almost a principle, "God is high, and the Emperor far off."

000 Their modes of fishing and hunting, and such productions of the country as I have not noticed may be found in Cook's and other travels. I will therefore proceed to compare the present happiness of the people of this Peninsula, with that which
231 they formerly enjoyed. In the first place, as to
563 their possessions in horses or horned cattle.—It
R appears by the last census, that there are but one
177 hundred and nine of the former, and nine hundred
.23 and sixty-eight of the latter in the whole Peninsula, two-thirds of which are in the hands of the Russians; and but three hundred and ninety-three head of cattle in the possession of three thousand four hundred Kamtchatdales and Koriaks. It is to be regretted that the flattering prospects held out by Captain King, have not been realized. The introduction of horses and horned cattle would much tend to ameliorate the condition of the peo-

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231 R 177 .23 ple, were they once imported upon a large scale. The dogs, like the aborigines, are on the decline, and probably twenty or thirty years more will leave nothing in Kamtchatka but the Russians and animals of the chase. When it is recollected that Kamtchatka has such magnificent and extensive meadows, and that the climate is not severe; and when it is considered with what facility government might send each year two or three hundred head of young cattle by the annual transports to Tygil, it may be naturally supposed that the different chiefs have been attending more to their personal concerns than to those of the peninsula. That the place might be made even to flourish, there can be no reasonable doubt.

651 R 177 .65 The expenses of the colony have been very great to Russia, and must continue so, as long as the present plan is persisted in. The yasack amounts to a less sum of money than the single maintenance of a chief. Five hundred heads of foxes or sables, worth six thousand roubles, or three hundred pounds, is the amount; while the expences of the colony cannot fall short of two hundred thousand roubles, or ten thousand pounds.

164 758 R 177 .75 The depopulated state of this peninsula is also to be attributed to other causes. Their continual wars and insurrections greatly thinned them, and these were followed by the introduction of the small-pox, which in the year 1768, carried off no less than six thousand persons; and twenty thousand are sup-

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posed to have fallen victims to it within a short period. Yet at this moment there is a want of vaccinating matter, nor is it a questionable assertion that the quality of medicines in the hospitals is shamefully adulterated, and the quantity small. The present worthy chief has however caused an inquiry to be made upon this subject, and the result has been transmitted to government. But it is not the small pox alone, that the arrival of the Russians introduced into this place; the distemper before alluded to has made, and continues to make, most dreadful ravages in every part of the peninsula, very few families being free from the taint, and no part of the world can show more miserable objects of its fury. The whole race indeed look like beings better qualified to extinguish than propagate the human species; nor is this surprising, considering their present state, almost without hospitals, medicines, or attendants, save that ill-managed house at Malka.

Besides these two diseases, the inhabitants of Kamtchatka are subject to all those which make havoc in countries where the people are ordinarily ill fed, ill clothed, and liable to famine. The last has frequently visited this Peninsula, more from a want of people than of food; for fish is not always to be had upon both sides of the Peninsula at the same time, and they have not the means of transporting the superabundant quantity to the opposite coast.

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273 Another great cause of this ravage in population
435 has arisen from the introduction of spirits: a Kamt-
563 chatdale will sell his last sable or fox for a glass
733 of it, though he is not physically strong enough to drink any thing of the kind. When it is considered that sixteen thousand bottles of this trash are consumed in the short period of three or four months by six or seven hundred people, we may well feel pity and surprise—pity for the poor women and children, and surprise at the means of getting either the money or sables. Such a quantity of spirit ought to sell for fifty thousand roubles, which is one hundred per cent. upon the price at Okotsk, but it is in reality sold for twice that sum. When it is recollected that officers, soldiers, sailors, merchants, and priests travel round the Peninsula for the purposes of trade, it will be less wonderful when I assert that each bottle of spirits sold to the Kamtchatdales, produces the value of ten and twelve shillings. Now allowing half the quantity imported (eight thousand bottles) to be consumed by the aborigines, this would produce from eighty to one hundred thousand roubles, while the cost is, in Okotsk, only twenty-five thousand. I have seen a bottle of spirits sold for a sable, and afterwards, when the party was drunk, a bottle of adulterated liquor has fetched the same price: in short, I have seen three and even four sables given for two bottles of spirits.

Allowing seven hundred and fifty families of the

29:Cochrane T-2 (1821-22)1824 Kamchadal

273 Koriaks and Kamtchatdales, which is five to each
435 family, and that half the quantity of imported spi-
733 rit is consumed by them, it will appear that each family consumes at least twelve bottles in four months. By this plan the poor purchaser is drunk for days together, and for the rest of the year can get nothing to cheer him under his depression. The cost of that spirit to the Kamtchatdales is one hundred and fifty or two hundred roubles, a prodigious sum for a poor family to expend upon an article so pernicious in its moral and physical effects. Such a sum of money in Kamtchatka would produce near six or eight hundred pounds weight of flour; enough to support a small family during a whole year: or, such a sum would enable them to purchase proper clothing, culinary utensils, nets, twine, tobacco, axes, and knives. The evil of these grog-shops is carried to so ruinous an extent, that the children of the natives are left for three and four days without any food, save yukola, dried fish, doled out to them one or twice within that time. I have known instances of mothers and children being left without any means of support, in consequence of the retailing of such trash being allowed. The yukola and the bark of trees is, in such cases, almost the only nourishment the women and children can procure for several days. If they happen to be possessed of a cow, they are considered very fortunate. It needs little philosophy to prove that it is only by taking care of the rising

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273 generation that the stock itself can be preserved,
435 which will not long be possible, if spirit continue
563 to be transported and retailed out as it now is.—
R While making these reflections in England, I am
177 aware that the Russian Government have desisted
.27 from this trade, but this is only the worse for the Kamtchatdales, inasmuch as the pedlers take an extra quantity, and demand a most exorbitant price for a spirit infinitely inferior.

651 The abuses arising from the collection of the
661 yasack are most cruel. The yasack itself is incon-
R siderable, but from the arbitrary manner in which
177 it is collected, it is rendered odious and oppressive.
.65 The tribute is levied in kind at any low or capricious valuation, and it has not unfrequently happened that the Toion of a village, who does not properly compliment the Chief or other officer, upon the annual visit, has so small a price put upon his furs, in payment of their tribute, that they sustain a loss of two, three, and even four hundred per cent. I have seen sables valued at half-a-crown for which the merchants present would have given twelve shillings. Independent of the yasack, each Kamtchatdale has to pay seventy copecs, or seven pence, as a sort of capitation or poll-tax, upon failure of which the Ispravnick may have recourse to the most arbitrary and unjust measures. Any property may be seized and sold on the moment, such as axes, knives, nets, guns, kettles, or the clothing of the family; and it has often happened that a

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651 poor family has been ruined through the cruel and
661 oppressive conduct of these tax-gatherers, not from
R a deficiency of the *legal* dues, but of illegal dues.
177 The mode of taxation in each ostrog is also highly
.65 objectionable, and sometimes rendered cruel. They are not taxed as a people but as a place, and it not unfrequently happens that the village which formerly contained forty or fifty able people, and was taxed as such, does not the following year contain more than twenty or twenty-five, in consequence of illness or removals. There is, however, no remedy, the yasack of the whole must be paid by the few. It is also not a little singular that each ostrog is taxed in money, and yet money cannot be received; the duplicity of this act is too apparent to be mentioned, yet it would be seen that the government must be unacquainted with a fact of the kind, for the difference in the amount of the tribute would not equal one hundred pounds. Instead of the sum of money at which each village is rated, the inhabitants are obliged to pay furs at one fourth the value. Sables of the finest quality, and worth forty shillings a pair, are never averaged at more than ten. It would be more honest to increase the nominal tribute of money, or put a specific tax on furs, which would be felt less severely, because an appearance of candour would accompany it.

651 The next galling tax is that levied for the tax-
661 gatherer himself, and this is a greater grievance
563 than that levied on behalf of the Emperor, and
R under more humiliating circumstances. Each os-
177
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651 trog, and each Toion or Chief of it, is also com-
661 pelled to pay the same tribute to his actual Chief
563 as to the Emperor himself; so that the yasack is
R *de facto* paid at least five times over.
177
.66 Nor is the impolitic system of collecting the tribute more injurious than that arising from forced or gratuitous services, such as the forwarding of the post, the transport of flour and salt, and the issuing of padvodies, or forced levies of horses or dogs, to officers and favourites. This is indeed an intolerable abuse, and calls loudly for redress. There can be no doubt but that if the proprietors of dogs were rewarded at a proper time and in a proper manner, they would as much court the employment as they now abhor it. According to the present plan the natives lose their time, their dogs, their health, and their provisions. Any favourite or officer who may wish to trade is furnished with one of these free billets, which authorizes him, upon the plea of public duty, to call out men and dogs. While the manner of the officer or favourite seems to intimate, that he confers an obligation upon the Chief of the village by his acceptance of a couple of sables as a present. Nor is this all: not content with the present, the party travelling has the privilege of trading, and buying just as many more sables as the poor aboriginal may have caught, and which are invariably sold for just such a consideration as the officer may incline to give.

If a governor or officer be compelled to travel upon public service, and receive from the Crown a

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651 sum of money to pay travelling expenses, it seems
661 very strange that such money is not paid to these
563 poor people. As little can I understand why a post
R should travel gratis: surely the poorest and most
177 distant part of the Russian empire, should not be
.66 oppressed in such a manner. It is true, the sum paid by the government to officers when travelling is small, as well as that paid to the postillion when in charge of the post; but small as it is in itself, it would be acceptable to those to whom it would appear much. As to officers' travelling, for which there is no public necessity, they can at best but reap the advantages belonging to the fair trader, who is not inconsiderably taxed. I have heard an officer of high rank assert, that every voyage from Kamtchatka to Okotsk and back again, was worth ten thousand roubles, or five hundred pounds; and I believe he spoke the truth.

661 With respect to the pedlers, here denominated
183 merchants, they in truth ought to be taxed severe-
435 ly, as well in regard to the goods they bring as
441 the price at which they are sold, the articles being
563 such as are of light burthen, or will return the greatest profit. The ignorance of the aborigines is such, and their thoughtlessness of the future so great, that they prefer present luxuries to future
661 necessities. The quantity of articles hawked about
437 by the merchants consists of tobacco, spirits, silks,
439 tea, sugar, nankeen, and cotton handkerchiefs.
441 Every Kamtchatdale keeps open house, and upon
563 the arrival of a Russian his door is held open, the

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661 owner standing by it uncovered, and awaiting the
437 entry of his noble guest, who, making an obeisance
439 to the kasaika or landlady, passes on to the most
441 comfortable part of the dwelling, and divesting
563 himself of the unwieldy clothing so necessary in this part of the world, calls for dinner or supper as the time may be, orders food for his dogs, eats and drinks well, has a bed prepared for him, and takes breakfast, consisting of fine game, fish, and the like. The intermediate time is employed in extorting three or four hundred per cent. profit for his goods, and the only remuneration to his host is a glass of spirits or a leaf of tobacco, in some cases not even a "thank ye," although stress of weather has, unfortunately for them, detained him to partake of their hospitality for a week or more.

Were the merchants compelled to take more woollens and linens, some flour or oatmeal, with a sufficient quantity of axes, knives, kettles, twine, nets, and other implements of great necessity, there would be less objection to their proceeding round the Peninsula, and less inducement for officers to do so. Tobacco, it is true, is an article of great demand as well as of great necessity; tea and sugar are also in considerable demand, though, probably, too much money is lavished upon both these articles, by the Kamtchatdales; as also upon silks, nankeens, and fine cottons. A great benefit would arise from the establishment of a general fair in Kamtchatka, to be held at St. Peter and St. Paul's, as well as from two or three provincial fairs to be held upon a certain day at certain places.

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563 cial fairs to be held upon a certain day at certain
793 places. Among the people who also travel round
759 the peninsula of Kamtchatka are doctors and par-
661 sons. They are both extremely troublesome, for while the one affects to prepare the soul, and the other the body, both I believe are more concerned in fleecing the thoughtless aboriginal, and in depriving him of the means of support.

177 The quantity of convicts sent amongst a people
563 so susceptible of imposition is also a serious grievance. The convicts, as Russians, have an indirect ascendancy over the Kamtchatdales, which is exercised in a most intolerant and infamous manner. The convicts frequently desert, and commit every species of villany and outrage, even to the fomenting of insurrections. This was the case during my stay in the peninsula; nor are the Kamtchatdales so dull, but that they remember Count Beniofsky
000 with horror. If the government of Russia really feel interested in the prosperity of Kamtchatka, and I don't doubt it, they have an easy mode of effecting it, by transplanting thither two or three thousand Yakuti, with their cattle. They are an industrious, ingenious, and peaceable people; and, being excellent herdsmen, they could not, of course, but thrive in a country of such extensive and rich pastures.

I cannot refrain from mentioning what appears to me a most desirable plan of administering a direct, and yet in-expensive relief to these poor people: Let the yasack be totally abolished, and let

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000 each family of the aborigines be compelled to take from the government one pood of flour per month, at the price, say, of a sable or fox skin. The result would be, that government would issue an extra six thousand poods of flour at an expense of sixty thousand roubles, in return for which they would receive six thousand skins, worth at least ninety thousand roubles; leaving a gross profit of four times the price of the present yasack, and actually assisting the Kamtchatdales by the abandonment of a direct tax of half the amount—to say nothing of the benefits which would accrue from such a measure to the females and children who are now left for many days without tasting any other food than bad fish
651 or the bark of trees. I do not know what effect a
R poll-tax may have upon the animal frame, but it
177 appears to be no incitement to procreation. In
.65 Kamtchatka it is the same as in Mexico; a single man pays a heavy tax, a married man a heavier, and a father the heaviest of all. Such conduct is bad policy on the part of government, and carries with it more the appearance of a wish to extinguish than to increase the population of Siberia.

437 I have already commented upon the evil effects
563 arising from forced levies, and forced services; of
661 the transport of flour, salt, spirits, the post, as well
R as officers from one place to another without any
177 remuneration to the inhabitants. Of the conduct of
.66 these travelling gentlemen, high and low, it will be sufficient to give a specimen. The officer, upon arriving at a village, is received by the Toion or

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437 Chief, and conducted to the warmest and cleanest
563 part of the yourte. His upper garments are taken
374 from him, cleared of the snow and put out in the
661 open air for the night; it being understood that
R the colder the dress is put on in a cold country,
177 the warmer it ultimately becomes. The landlady, or
.66 Toionsha, is also engaged in scraping the boots of the travellers, to prevent the heat of the room from melting the snow which adheres to them. The best provisions are then got ready as fast as possible, either for dinner or supper, as the time may suit. The Toion then comes in with a reluctant smile and a pair of handsome sables, and bowing to the officer, places them upon the table for his acceptance. Dinner being at length served up, the officer may be considerate enough to give the Toion a glass of spirits, as also to permit the family to partake of the tea-leavings. Having finished his dinner, the officer asks the Toion if the chase has been good, and how many sables he has got, probably two, four or six, which he accordingly takes for as many handkerchiefs, pieces of nankeen, pounds of tobacco, or a small quantity of tea and sugar. The dogs of the village are at last ordered out and the officer departs, in perfect complacency with his conduct and condescending demeanour.

000 I have never been able to ascertain the exact number of animals annually caught in the peninsula, but suppose they cannot fall short of thirty thousand, worth at least two hundred thousand roubles. One

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000out of every forty is supposed to be paid to the emperor upon their arrival at Okotsk, but it is very difficult to insure any payment of such a tax except from the regular traders, and they also manage to defraud the government of the proper dues. The value of the furs varies; a sea-otter is worth thirty-five pounds; a river-otter, two pounds; a black fox, twenty pounds; black and white fox, ten pounds; brown fox, two pounds; a common fox, twelve shillings; and a white or blue fox, as little as two shillings and sixpence; sables vary from eight to twelve shillings. For these bread is bartered at eight shillings the pood; tea at twelve shillings the pound; sugar, four shillings, and tobacco three shillings the pound; in short no article is sold for less than four hundred per cent. profit upon the actual expense of fetching it from Canton; with the advantage in that case of procuring all sorts of coarse cottons, nankeens, and handkerchiefs, besides iron utensils.

The American Company might, and ought to contract with the government for supplying flour to Okotsk, Idgiga and Kamtchatka, for which about forty thousand poods are annually required. Their abundance of unemployed vessels would also enable them to furnish the aborigines with every thing they require, at a cheap and yet a profitable rate. But such is the pertinacity and jealousy of those composing that body, that they will do nothing even to benefit themselves, if it be also of

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000 benefit to others. And thus, a trade with Manilla, Canton, the South Sea islands, California, Calcutta and Japan, as well as the establishment of a whale fishery are sacrificed; and the eastern frontiers of the Russian empire remain in their original barren, impoverished, and savage state, instead of boasting a flourishing trade carried on by a civilized, organized, and friendly population. The produce of the above mentioned places might be warehoused in Kamtchatka, and in the ensuing summer be transported to Okotsk, and thence over all Siberia.

The drying and salting of fish, the felling of timber for furniture, and the countenancing of agricultural pursuits, could not fail of benefiting Kamtchatka; but the whale fishery would, above all things redound to the honour and interest of Russia. It may not be amiss to add, that the importation of foreign corn would much assist the Yakuti; its immediate effect would be to save the lives of twenty thousand horses, which are annually sacrificed by hard work or famine. Formerly, when the horses were more numerous, from eighty to one hundred thousand were annually employed between Okotsk and Yakutsk by the merchants, the American Company, and the government; at present there are not more than thirty thousand. Of these, at least one half are sacrificed, and the remainder rendered unfit for a second trip. The whole number of horses annually sacrificed does not, it is said, fall short of fifty thousand; so that ere long they will also be

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000 extinct, and with them the very being of the Yakuti, who are even now going down in an equal ratio.

231 R 177 .23 Much benefit has been derived to the colony from the exertions of the present Chief, Captain Rikord. The rule of never allowing a cow to be killed until she is past calving, is in itself excellent, but the stock on hand is so small that a century would elapse before what can be termed herds of cattle could be seen wandering and feasting upon the almost unbounded pastures of the peninsula. What the different chiefs have been doing for the last fifty years, Heaven alone knows! When Captains King and Clarke were here, they seem to have taken it for granted, or to have been informed, that cattle of all descriptions were in a flourishing state. From the proximity of Okotsk to Tygil, a couple of transports might, in one summer, transport at least one thousand head of cattle, which, repeated for ten years, would place the peninsula in an absolutely enviable situation. This act of humanity would be attended with no expense to the government; the Kamtchatdales would willingly pay the value in sables, and the result would be, that no part of the vast Russian empire would be richer or better provided with food of various descriptions than the distant province of Kamtchatka.

134 241 R 177 .24 Upon the banks of the Kamtchatka, where the land lies distant from the salt water, and sheltered by the mountains from the east winds; as well as

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134 on those banks which have been enriched by the
241 lava emitted by the volcanoes, barley, oats, and
R rye have been produced, but in no instance with
177 so much success as to pay the labour. The pro-
. 24 ductions, it is true, have been a little more varied and a little riper, but rarely consumable. In spite of this fact, the gazettes of St. Petersburgh formally and officially announce this year that a quartern of rye produced nine quarterns, and that the size or weight of a common potatoe was three quarters of a pound. Three quarters of an ounce would be a sufficient tax upon credulity: I have no hesitation in saying that both these reports are fabulous in every sense of the word, for I have never seen a potatoe in the whole province either ripe, or larger than a hen's egg.

If large herds of cattle were distributed on the banks of the Kamtchatka, and other favoured places, with the benefit of manure, agricultural implements, and knowledge, no doubt the soil might be made to answer the purpose. I certainly cannot conceive the climate of Kamtchatka to be such, as of itself to preclude the pursuit of agriculture in some of its minor branches, as I consider the soil to be much superior to that of Connecticut, or Massachusetts, or either of our Canadas.

231 In the vicinity of Avatcha are to be seen, what are by some termed artificial enclosures, within which cattle were formerly maintained, but I conclude them to be natural enclosures formed by the

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231 overflowing of the rivers. My reason is, that no enclosure is to be found upon the land side, but only on the borders of the rivers, and small streams, and there they are perfect; and we are generally informed that the Kamtchatdales possessed no other domestic animals than dogs.

Before entirely closing these remarks respecting Kamtchatka, and its grievances, I may just advert
563 to one or two points not hitherto dwelt on. The
793 children of the natives receive no education, and
871 the children of the Russians but little more. There
R certainly is a school existing in St. Peter and St.
177 Paul's, governed by a priest, and regular school-
.87 master; but one is a great rogue, and the other a greater sot. The sum allowed for the maintenance of each child is, I believe, five pounds per annum, scarcely enough to buy clothing, and were it not for the abundance of fish caught, and some assistance from their families, I really do not see
563 how the boys could be kept alive. Of the clerical
793 gentlemen themselves, I may observe, that they
R maintain a great distinction between practice and
177 precept. They are very numerous: I know not what
.79 so many do in so poor a place, there being no congregations to employ so great a number. The revenue received by these reverend gentlemen is far from inconsiderable, and although it is done under the disguise of voluntary contribution, still it presses heavy upon the people; and heavier still when it is considered that they do little work of any kind be-

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563 sides trade. Of late the Emperor has given the cler-
793 gy an allowance of flour as well as a regular salary,
R and it may therefore be hoped that the natives will,
177 at least, be so far benefited as to have fewer of their
. 79 visits, except on their spiritual concerns.

Whether the Russian government will pay any
000 attention to the serious and deplorable situation of the peninsula of Kamtchatka is of no personal consequence to me, though I may well feel a strong interest concerning a place in which I resided for more than a year, and where I married. The ceremony was attended with much more pomp and parade than if it had been celebrated in England: it took place on the 8th of January, and I certainly am the first Englishman that ever married a Kamtchatdale, and my wife undoubtedly the first native of that peninsula that ever visited happy Britain.

The winter was passed in a constant round of hospitality and comfort, and hardly any thing re-
133 markable occurred to call for observation. Three shocks of earthquakes were felt, two of them very severe: one threw the sand up from the banks of the river Kamtchatka, and quite annihilated the snow; the Kliuchefska Sopka also
132 emitted flames and lava. The snow began to disappear at St. Peter and St. Paul's in the beginning of May. By the middle of the month one of the transports sailed from the port to Nishney Kamtchatsk, reaching it in five days; and by the latter

[in the winter of 1821-22--Analyst]

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132 end of May the snow had entirely disappeared, and Spring, in the course of a few days, made her welcome appearance; wild flowers and vegetables were every where springing up, and enlivening the dreariness of the last seven months. Even the rigging of the transport which was to carry me back, excited my interest, and reminded me of former times. The attention of the inhabitants was sufficiently engaged by the accession of fish, as herrings in the inner harbour, cod in the outer
222 haven, and seals every where. Some among them proceeded to the islands at the mouth of the haven, and brought in some thousands of eggs, while others were out in shooting parties, sending us in snipes,
132 wild ducks, and partridges. The wild garlic made its first appearance at Cape Garlick so early as the 15th of May.

000 Only a few individuals died in the hospital, most of them with the scurvy; the remainder were soon restored to sound health by Spring and fresh fish. Our evening walks were sometimes extended to the summits of the hills, where we took our tea or smoked a segar; but latterly the little place,—I cannot call it a town,—became overflowed from the melting of the snow, and it was with difficulty we could move about. In the month of June a vessel arrived from Canton and Manilla, in ballast, having failed in procuring a cargo of flour. By that vessel I received a most friendly letter from Mr. Urmston, the chief of the British factory, together

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000 with a file of English newspapers, magazines, &c. which employed me till the 1st of July, when we were ready to sail.

361 St. Peter and St. Paul's, the chief city of the peninsula of Kamtchatka, contains forty-two dwellings, besides fifteen edifices belonging to the government, an old church, and the foundation of a new one. Among the public buildings are to be reckoned magazines for bread, for powder, for sailors, for convicts, for wine, and for arms; a guard-house, smithy, hospital, chancery, school, and a building for the chief and his assistant. All, however, with the exception of the hospital, sailor's barracks, and school, are at best, like the rest of the city, emblems of misery and wretchedness. I have never seen even on the banks of the Frozen Sea so contemptible a place, hardly meriting the name of a village, much less that of a city; yet such is the place which has been so eulogized from one end of the world to the other. The erection of hospitals, of schools, of churches, and the diffusion of happiness, have been extravagantly vaunted of in magazines and reviews, in defiance of the most lamentable facts of a very opposite description.

563 I cannot imagine what a governor has to do in
609 such a place; a civil commissary would surely
631 have been enough. The only people, in my opi-
R nion, who can be called happy, are the Koriaks,
177 because they are independent. The Russians com-
.63 plain of being sent to such a vile place, utterly

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563 destitute of society; the Creoles of their being
609 kept in a state of poverty; while the Kamtchat-
631 dales bitterly lament the association with either the
R one or the other. It has been observed that St.
177 Peter and St. Paul's can never be a good town,
.63 owing to its want of wood. It may be asked, why then was the seat of government removed from a more eligible place, Nishney Kamtchatsk, or why was it not removed to the centre of agriculture and population, so far as either can be said to exist? It has been already changed three times, and is, I be-
631 lieve, destined to another removal. Kamtchatka
R neither can nor will thrive so long as its chiefs are
177 sent for five years only: such a short period
.63 scarcely allows them the time of doing good, however well disposed they may be. The general mode of occupying the allotted term may be thus described. The first year is employed in looking about and forming places for the improvement of the country, the amelioration of the condition of the aborigines, &c.: the second year is passed in making reports, stating opinions, &c.: the third year brings the reply of the government, directing or authorizing the mode of administration: the fourth is employed in preparing or at most in acting upon such orders: while the fifth and last year is generally employed in preparing to return to Europe, and levying a parting contribution:—and thus the whole five years are, more or less, taken up in trading and accumulating as much

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631 money as possible. The very shortest term of a
R chief's command at Kamtchatka should be ten
177 years: let him then only be liberally paid, and I
.63 will venture to say, that many suitable characters will be found, who will prefer to administer justice with clemency and honor, to the degrading of their characters by a mean and derogatory traffic. If an increase of rank, double pay and provisions, an extra pension, and the most unlimited powers are not sufficient to ensure a just discharge of the duties, what besides conscience ever can induce it?

136 Of the Kurile Islands, though they are not now
161 in the government of Kamtchatka, having been
651 ceded by the Emperor in property to the American
R Company, I shall make but a very few remarks,
177 and with them close my observations on Kamt-
.65 chatka.

This chain of islands is divided between the Russian and Japanese empires; of those belonging to the former empire, but few are inhabited. The first Kurile, situate at sixty-five miles from Cape Lopatka, has three yourtes, with four males and eight females, nominally paying as tribute six sea-otters and twelve roubles in money; but, as no sea-otters are found, and the islands abound in foxes, seven of these are received in lieu of them. There is in the island a tolerable road-stead for small craft on the NW side. Immense quan-
237 tities of waterfowl, as ducks, geese, and swans,
291 frequent the place; and from the skins and feathers

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the inhabitants make their parkas and all their warm clothing, which are also exceedingly comfortable and beautiful. The climate of the islands resembles that of St. Peter and St. Paul's. The soil is generally good, producing fine pastures. On the first isle there was formerly an abundance of cattle, but now only two cows remain.

The second island, about ninety miles from the first, has seven yourtes, with thirty-five males and forty-two females, paying tribute for itself and the fourteenth isle, nominally, thirty-five sea-otters; that is, twenty-three foxes and one hundred and fifty roubles. The fourteenth isle has three yourtes, fifteen males, and seventeen females. Of the intermediate islands, and those beyond the fourteenth, I could obtain but very little information; the whole are evidently volcanic productions, and are supposed to have been separated by some violent convulsion of nature from the peninsula of Kamtchatka. The islands, which are lofty and bold, are said to be without rivers, nor are there any harbours known. It is to be remembered, however, that they have been but very imperfectly surveyed. The inhabitants are supposed to be of the same origin as those of Kamtchatka, though they differ in the custom of wearing long beards, which was probably introduced among them by the Russians. Their dialect is the same with that of the inhabitants near Cape Lopatka; from whence baidares are frequently sent to the first and second isle, to bring the tribute and furs. [the Kurils--Analyst]

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136 first and second isle, to bring the tribute and furs. Foxes are said to be the only animals of the chase, and here they abound in all colours. Sea otters were also formerly taken, and still, at intervals, visit some of the islands. Excepting those caught near Nishney Kamtchatsk, they are considered the most valuable of the species.

[on the norther Kuril Islands--Analyst]